



# Ashfield Junior School

Inspiring our children to dream big, be extraordinary and to  
change the world

## Mobile Phone Policy

Date agreed: November 2024

Date of next review: November 2027

## **Introduction and Aims**

At Ashfield Junior School the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice, through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse; with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools.

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, and members of the Governing Board, ASHA, children, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Behaviour Policy (including anti bullying)
- Guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children in Schools

## **Code of conduct**

Our code of conduct is designed with the aim of creating a school environment where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment. Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse and how to minimise it.
- Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- Are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

## **Personal Mobiles – Staff**

Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.

Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.

Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. classroom, playground).

Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.

It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.

Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call. This call should be taken where there are no children present.

Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads.

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

### **Mobile Phones for work related purposes**

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite day visits and activities. However staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- Mobile phones may be used to make contact with parents during school trips out of school office hours or in an emergency, however, generally all relevant communications should be made via the school office.
- Where parents are accompanying trips they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

### **Mobile Phones for Off-site Residential Activities**

Staff will use their mobile phones to:

- Keep in regular contact with the school
- Contact parents in an emergency and/or out of office hours
- Take general photos to upload to social media to keep parents in touch with what the school journey party is up to – **these will not include photos of children's faces; and all photos will be deleted from the phone directly after up-load**

### **Personal Mobiles - Pupils**

While we recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children, for most pupils, bringing a mobile phone to school is completely unnecessary.

Mobile phones can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- From the academic year 2024/25, children will not be allowed to bring a 'smart phone' into school with the exception of the current Year 6 class. Children who request permission for their child to bring a mobile phone will be given a copy of the permission form and a letter (see appendix) informing the parent that the phone should be a 'dumb phone'
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones at school or on trips
- If in the event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school, the parent must complete and application form for mobile phone use and submit it to the school office in advance. Permission will only be granted in special circumstances. A child walking independently from home to school and back does **not** constitute special circumstances. If however, a child travels a considerable distance alone and by public transport – this may constitute special circumstances.
- The device must be a basic phone (not "smart") - only capable of sending simple text messages or making phone calls and it must be handed in, switched off, to the teacher first thing in the

morning and collected from them by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk).

- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and parents will be expected to collect the phone from the school office at the end of the school day.
- Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the head teacher does have the power to intervene to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site.
- Further to our Mobile Phone Policy, children are not permitted to wear 'Smart' watches where that have access to their mobile phone, the internet, email, apps (e.g. WhatsApp) or watches that can take photographs

### **Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors**

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

### **Parents**

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is *courteous* and *appropriate* to the school environment.

We also allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – **but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.**

### **Dissemination**

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed as necessary. The next formal review of the policy will be in Summer Term 2021.



## Appendix 1

### Request for Permission to bring a mobile phone to school

This form should be completed and submitted to the school office.

Children may not bring a mobile phone to school until permission is granted by the school.

**We are a 'smart phone' free school. Please ensure that the phone you provide your child is NOT a 'smart phone' – see letter from Bushey & Radlett Primary School Consortium**

Child's Name:

Class:

When will the mobile phone is required in school:

\*Reason for request: (please see examples below)

*Please note that a child walking independently from home to school and back does **not** constitute special circumstances.*

I have read and understand the school's mobile phone policy and I have discussed this with my child.

Signed:

Print Name:

- \*Walk for more than 20 minutes on their own to and from school
- \*Need to use public transport alone
- \*Responsibility for younger sibling
- \*Complex meeting needs

## Appendix 2



### Bushey & Radlett Primary School Consortium

21st June 2024

#### A letter to our parents regarding a smartphone-free childhood

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you may have seen on the news, there is a growing movement amongst parents and schools to support a campaign called "Smartphone-Free Childhood". You can find out more by clicking the links below:

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

<https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>

We have been inspired by the action taken by our headteacher colleagues in St Albans, as the issues related to the misuse of smartphones and the damage being done to our children, have been a source of worry and frustration within our own local schools for the last few years. In tandem with Headteachers nationally, and with colleagues across Hertfordshire, this campaign has been shared and discussed among our Bushey & Radlett Primary Heads' Consortium. As local primary school headteachers, we all see the issues related to smartphone use continue to permeate our communities, and cause difficulty and damage to our children.

Therefore, a significant number of us are keen to support the aims of this national campaign and raise awareness more widely with our families regarding the risks which exist for our primary-aged children by allowing them access to such technological devices, at increasingly younger ages.

By "smartphones", we are referring to phones that are able to access the internet, AI and a myriad of games & apps, as opposed to mobile phones that are solely used for the purposes of communicating through text and phone calls.

We understand the importance of being able to contact your child as they become more independent, walking to and from school, in order to give you peace of mind, as well as for your children to be able to call or contact you in the case of any emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. However, your children's phones DO NOT need to enable them to have unfettered and unsupervised access to the internet in order for you to be able to contact them. Our concern, and our experience, is that you could be introducing even greater risks into the life of your child, than those you might be trying to mitigate.

The use of smartphones is now a feature of daily life for most adults and over the last few years we have noted that the age at which children are given their first smartphone has dropped significantly. We believe they have no place in the life of a primary-aged school child as our children do not have the developmental understanding to help them navigate appropriate social interactions through apps and social media, all of which were primarily designed for adult use.

Whilst smartphones can be a very helpful piece of technology for adults, we see that they are exposing our children to a number of negative risks. From our experiences and the work we have had to undertake with children and families in our own schools, these risk include the following:

Smartphones.....

- are highly addictive, with evidence to suggest that the lasting effects on young and developing brains are similar to that of gambling.
- have been linked to poor mental health, depression and low self-esteem.
- expose our children to harmful content including pornography, grooming, bullying and material that is not age appropriate. Children often have broken strong parental rules around the use of their smartphones in order to access such content and they are then unable to talk to their parents about what is significantly disturbing or upsetting them.

- reduce attention span – there is research to suggest that the use of smartphones are changing the way children’s brains develop and fundamentally affecting their ability to concentrate. We see the impact of children who are on screens/phones late into the evening, or prior to school, demonstrating reduced focus and attention during the school day.
- rob children of their childhood. Time spent on a device reduces time spent playing, interacting and developing vital social skills. The introduction of a smartphone increases time spent online and draws children further into a wider focus on screens, online gaming and social media interaction.

To show our professional support for this campaign, we are asking all Bushey & Radlett parents to delay giving their child/children a smartphone whilst they are pupils in our primary schools, and opt instead for a text/call phone alternative if necessary.

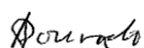
As Primary Head Teachers, we have committed to promoting our own schools as being ‘**smartphone free**’. We believe we can all work together across Bushey & Radlett, and join the growing movement across the county and country, to change the ‘normal’ age that children are given smartphones, putting pressure on the industry to exercise tighter controls and safety measures for our children.

However, to be successful, this movement relies on you, our children’s parents, to resist the pressure from your children and their peers and hold back on giving your children smartphones in their primary school years. In this way you will be working together with a wide network of parents and schools to reset the expectation and remove social peer pressure.

With your child’s school taking this stance, we are supporting you in overcoming the fear that your child is ‘missing out’ due to the belief that all their friends are utilising and accessing social interaction through the use of smartphone technology. We understand this pressure upon parents and we hope our united approach will be supportive to the challenges of parenting in the modern age. If you would like to find out more about this issue (including the facts listed above and alternative phone options) or would like to become more actively involved, please ask at your school or click on the links in this letter.

Our children’s futures are so important, to you and to us. We want our children to understand the power and amazing capacity of exciting and evolving technologies to enhance our lives for the better. We need to root their understanding of the power of technology firmly within the values that will enable them to be good citizens, utilising technology and interacting in the online world in a way that mirrors the integrity, responsibility and kindness that we are forming within our children, whilst fully understanding how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Let’s all give our children the time, space and boundaries that are needed whilst they are young to make mistakes and grow in their understanding, within the real world first.

With thanks for your valued support of our schools,




**Andre Dourado**  
Ashfield Junior  
School



**Melissa Adams**  
Merry Hill Infant  
School

D.Harte

**Danni Harte**  
Hartsbourne  
Primary School



**Mary Ann Cooper**  
Bushey Primary  
Education Federation



**Lana Gillam**  
St John’s Infant and  
Nursery School

A.Traxon  
N. Peters

**Anna Traxon &  
Ness Peters**  
Newberries Primary  
School



**Bindu Rai**  
Highwood Primary  
School



**Steven Wells**  
Bournehall Primary  
School



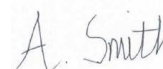
**Davinia Leggett**  
Fair Field Junior  
School



**Rebecca Tregear**  
Little Reddings  
Primary School

**P Barefoot**

**Penny Barefoot**  
Bushey Heath  
Primary School



**Anna Smith**  
Sacred Heart Catholic  
Primary School